

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3309

COMMITTEES:
ARMED SERVICES
BANKING, HOUSING, AND
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HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS
SMALL BUSINESS AND
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

April 29, 2014

The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy
Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-0108

Dear Assistant Secretary Darcy:

I respectfully request that you meet with the Dare County Board of Commissioners regarding critical infrastructure investments at Oregon Inlet in the North Carolina's Outer Banks.

Funding for dredging at Oregon Inlet is vital for a coastal infrastructure that supports jobs throughout North Carolina. The Army Corps of Engineers – Wilmington District (USACE) have estimated that in order to keep the federal channel dredged to the necessary depth for commercial vessels would require funding around \$4-\$5 million annually. In FY 2014, USACE funding for the Oregon Inlet and other channels in the area was at \$1.3 million. Despite that already low amount the President's FY 2015 budget proposal called for only \$800,000, greatly jeopardizing the USACE's ability to keep the inlet maintained and operational year round. The inlet, which is authorized for a depth of 14 feet, already has parts as shallow as 4 feet and less in many areas.

Furthermore, the Herbert C. Bonner Bridge, which spans the Oregon Inlet and is the only highway and lifeline that connects Hatteras Island with the rest of North Carolina, is in the process of being replaced to maintain safe travel. The new bridge incorporates a design that will allow for better vessel navigation and natural channel movement through the inlet. However, construction of the new bridge has been halted until lawsuits attempting to stop the replacement project are resolved.

A consistent and adequate level of funding is necessary for the USACE to keep the Oregon Inlet dredged and operational. A failure to do so could greatly impact many North Carolina communities whose economies are still in recovery. Similarly, the Bonner Bridge Replacement Project would provide better access through the inlet, making passage safer for everyone.

Thank you for your consideration of this meeting request with the Dare County Board of Commissioners. I look forward to your reply and you hearing first hand from my constituents who are impacted by the Oregon Inlet.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Kay R. Hagan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end of the name.

Kay R. Hagan